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*A Memoir on the DISTILLATION of PERSIMONS,
By Mr. ISAAC BARTRAM.*

THIS Society having proposed at one of their meetings in November last, that a trial should be made for drawing a spirit from the fermented juice of the *Persimon*, I was appointed to make the experiment.

THE season being then so far advanced, I apprehended it was too late; but being still urged by the Society to make the essay, I purchased about half a bushel of the *fruit* in the month of December, which was so much damaged by the frost and rain, that I almost despaired of success; the proper time for gathering it being in the month of October.

I HOWEVER proceeded in the following manner.

I CAUSED the *Persimons* to be well mashed, and put them in a five gallon keg, to which I added two gallons of water, and about two penny worth of *yeast*, in order to promote a fermentation. This being compleated, I committed the whole to the *still*, and drawed there from near half a gallon of proof *spirit*, of an agreeable flavor.

FROM the success of this experiment, I think it may be concluded, that the *Persimon* may be rendered very beneficial to those who have many of them growing on their plantations, and that they are worthy of the public attention, as many advantages may be reaped from the cultivation of the trees; some of which I shall hint at in the course of this paper.

To those who would undertake to collect large quantities of this *fruit* for distillation, I would recommend the following proceſs.

LET a number of empty hogsheads, in proportion to the quantity of fruit, be provided; take out one of the heads of each, and in the other let a hole be bored, at about four inches

from the chimb, into which fix a plug, which may be occasionally taken out from the lower end, when the casks are fixed upon trussels, at a small distance from the ground. In these casks, over the holes, lay a number of small sticks, covered with straw, about two or three inches thick, to prevent the pulp from choaking them.

YOUR hogheads being thus prepared, fill one of them half full with *Perfmons*, which have been well mashed; add water until it arise within one third of the top; then cover the cask with the head that had been taken out, and let it stand about nine days; by this time the pulpy or feculent part of the fruit will be separated by the act of fermentation; you are then to draw off the liquor, by the hole in the bottom of the hog-head, and put it in a tight cask, closely bunged up, to prevent a second fermentation, whereby your liquor would become acid, and be rendered unfit for the *still*.

HAVING thus extracted the more vinous parts from the first hoghead, let as much water be added as before, which must be well stirred, and mixed with the pulp, thereby to procure the whole strength of the *fruit*.

A SECOND hoghead is then to be charged half full of *fruit*, well mashed as the first, and instead of pure water, fill it two thirds full with the second extract of the first hoghead, leaving it to ferment, as before directed. This fermentation being perfected, draw off the liquor, and let it be bunged up close. The third hoghead is to be treated as the second, and in like manner every succeeding cask. After you have in this manner converted all your *fruit* into a fermented liquor, let it be kept at least one month before it is distilled, if it can be preserved without danger of its becoming sour; for I have observed that vinous spirits, drawn from new fermented liquors, are not equal in flavor to those which have been meliorated by age.

THE *Perfmon Tree* is of a quick growth, and yields great quantities of fruit in few years after it is planted. The wood

wood is hard, has a fine close grain, and may be applied to many mechanical purposes ; it burns well, and its ashes contain a very large proportion of salts.

THESE trees grow spontaneously near all our tide water rivers, and succeed in almost any kind of soil. They thrive best when planted in an open place. I would therefore recommend, that they should be fixed at about ten feet apart, round the fields, by which means they would be no incumbrance, but contribute to the support of the fences, as they would serve for live posts. The leaves soon rot, and become good manure, insomuch that it is remarkable that grass grows better under these trees, than any other.

EVERY farmer who has *fifty acres* of land, might plant *three hundred* trees round his fields ; which being disposed as before directed, would be a great addition to the beauty of his farm.

LET us suppose each full grown tree will produce *two bushels* of fruit upon an average (some I have seen bear thrice that quantity.) From a farm then of *fifty acres*, *six hundred* bushels of fruit might be gathered ; and as from the foregoing experiment a bushel is found to yield a gallon of wholeome and very agreeable spirit, every farmer having that number of trees, might make *six hundred* gallons of liquor as good as rum.

THE expences attending the process, we will suppose to amount to one half of the value of the liquor when distilled, which admitting to be worth but *Two Shillings* per gallon, will leave a profit of *Thirty Pounds* per annum ; a sum equal to the interest of a farm that would cost *Five Hundred Pounds*.

WERE we to extend this calculation to what every fifty acres of cultivated land in this province *only* would produce, we should find that we might soon become independent of the West-Indies, for the expensive article of rum, and thereby yearly save many Thousand Pounds to this colony.

A VALUABLE gum exudes from this tree; for the collecting of which, the Society established in London for promoting Arts and Manufactures, offered a premium of Twenty Pounds Sterl. for the greatest quantity, not less than fifty pounds weight that should be collected from the *Perfimon Tree*, in any of the British colonies in America, and imported from thence into the port of London, between the first of April, 1762, and the first of April, 1763. And for the next greatest quantity, not less than twenty-five pounds weight, a premium of Ten Pounds Sterling,

I HAVE also been informed, that an excellent beer is made of *Perfimons* in some of the southern provinces.

HENCE it will appear, that the cultivation of the *Perfimon Tree* is an object worthy the attention of our farmers, as it promises great profit to themselves, and a still greater advantage to the community in general.

A letter from Doctor OTTO to Doctor BOND, gives the following account of an Oil, made from the seeds of the common large SUN-FLOWER, viz.

" **T**HE oil is made much in the same manner as the linseed oil with fire, only that the husk is taken off before it is pounded and pressed; tho' I think it would be much better if it had been drawn cold. One bushel of the seed, in the manner this was made, yields about three quarts of oil: What quantity of oil one acre of land will produce, I cannot assert at present; however, there is a spot of land planted, and the seed now ripening, the contents whereof we will measure, and also the produce, and I will inform you of the result. It is frequently used by our brethren, instead of sweet oil, for salad, and, with a small addition of the sweet oil, serves very well for that purpose,"

UPON examining some of the oil which was sent by Dr. OTTO, it was found thin, clear, and agreeable to the taste.
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